Congress withdrawal. That is why we walk out in protest.

SHRI M. VINCENT: The hon. Minister... (*Interruptions*)... I walk out. You know why? To wash you out from Tamil Nadu politics.

(*At this stage some hon. Members left the Chamber*)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, Mr. Natwar Singh to make a statement.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

(II), Iran-Iraq war—safety of India Nationals in Tehran

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): Madam, Deputy Chairman Members are no doubt aware of reports regarding recent escalation of the tragic war between Iran and Iraq through missile attacks on each other's cities. These have resulted in civilian casualties on both sides.

Fortunately, Indian nationals in both countries have escaped the ferocity of these attacks. As the House is well aware, Government have persistantly called for an end to this tragic conflict and urged restraint on both sides.

We have welcomed the Security Council Resolution, 598 to bring about a peaceful settlement of the conflict and the efforts of the UN Secretary General to bring about its early implementation. Meanwhile, in view of the danger to the families of India based staff of our Embassy in Teheran, arrangements are in hand for their evacuation by a special flight. This facility can also be availed of by some families of the Indian community in Teheran.

It is proposed to arrange the evacuation on 10th March, 1988. The security and welfare of the families of the India based Embassy staff in Baghdad is constantly under review.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): Madam, Deputy Chairman, the Iran-Iraq war is continuing for more than seven years only because of the sentiments of the people of both the countries just to show as to who is supreme. Madam, actually both the countries are fighting a futile war. There is no purpose behind it. The development in both the countries has been stalled because of this war. I know this personally because I visited Iraq. People are living in that country under tension and fear of attack at any time. Even our Indian Embassy people who are living in the remote corner of Baghdad had to escape the missiles which have been sent by Iran against the city of Baghdad. Madam, though both these countries were having steady development earlier, they had to stop all the developmental activity since they were concentrating on war. The Hon. Minister has stated in his statement that fortunately, Indian nationals in both the countries have escaped the ferocity of these attacks. So far the Government of India through our embassies has made arrangements for the welfare of our people who are living there in both the countries.

[**The Vice-Chairman (Shri Jagesh Desai)** in the Chair].

Sir, we know that the people from this country have gone to both these countries in connection with executing the contracts and works which were undertaken through the schemes of the Government of India and these people apprehend that their lives will be in danger. For some time there was no attack by these countries on each other. But now both the countries are attacking each other and big and important buildings are being damaged. People have lost their lives. Even in the ocean our Indian ships have been completely damaged. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there was any representation from the Indian citizens who wanted to vacate Iran and Iraq because of the tension mounting in those countries.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, in Iraq I had the opportunity to meet President Saddam Hussain. I found from my talks with him that Iraq is for settlement. They are even fully respecting the Security Council Resolution No. 598, and the small difference which is there between the two countries can be settled by negotiations. They are very much dependent upon our country,

[Shri V. Narayanasamy]

India, for the purpose of setting their dispute. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what mediatory efforts have been made by the Government of India to settle the dispute existing between these two countries, because the impression which I gained from my talks in Iraq is that not only the people but even the leaders of the ruling group there, they want that India must play a key role in solving the problem which is existing between the two countries. Therefore, I would like to know these two points, namely, safety and security of Indians living in these two countries, and secondly, the wishes and aspirations of the people of Iran and leaders of Iraq that India must play a key role in settling the dispute and what mediatory efforts India has made to solve the crisis of futile war which is going on there between these two countries. Thank you.

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the war between Iran and Iraq is continuing in spite of the best wishes of Iraqi Government to end the war. But it seems that the authorities in Iran are adamant and they are attaching many conditions to agree to the Security Council Resolution No 598. One of the conditions is that unless and until Iraq dismisses its President Saddam Hussain, Iran is not going to compromise and the Security Council of the United Nations must declare that Iraq has committed an aggression on Iran. If the Resolution does not say so, Iran is not abiding by or agreeing to the Resolution of the Security Council. That is the Contention of the Iranians. These conditions seem to be unreasonable. No country should dictate to another country to remove their elected Government. It is for the people of Iraq to choose their own President and their own form of government, and it is between these two countries which are engaged in war, to come to some settlement by negotiations or compromise. When the Security Council adopted a resolution appealing both countries to end the war, Iraq accepted it unconditionally but Iran not. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, in view of the attitude of both these countries, and in view of the resolution of the Security Council, what role India is going to play to end this war. India is leader of the non-aligned movement and these two countries are also its members. So, India has to play an important role. I am aware, it was India that took the lead in convening meetings of the non-aligned countries and to press both the countries to end the war. But recently, I am not aware of India taking any leading part in convening these meetings, to discuss this issue. I would like to know from the hon. Minister how India is going to play this important role. Government of India's views are respected throughout the world. We have very good relations with Arab countries. We have very good relations with Iran. We must bring pressure on Iran to end the war.

Secondly, due to missiles war between these two countries now, there is a vast destruction to life and property. During this period, thousands have lost their lives on both sides; so much of property has been lost and damaged. As a matter of fact, Members of Indian Parliament have signed an appeal and sent it to the United Nations to end this war. I do not know what is the total number of Indians living in Iraq and Iraq, apart from our embassy staff, and what is their status, their conditions there and whether they want to leave those countries and if so, what arrangements have been made by the Government of India to evacuate them, besides other arrangements for their safety. And if they want to stay on there, in such circumstances, I would like to know what arrangements have been made for their safety.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY (Tamil Nadu): Flames of war in Teheran and Baghdad have not been put out. It is very tragic and unfortunate to see brothers fighting brothers, brothers killing brothers; countries which embraced the same faith, are at each other's throat. If I remember correctly, the then External Affairs Minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao air-dashed to that area when tension was mounting and attacks on each other were speeded up. So, may I know from the hon. Minister what effective steps India has undertaken to bring

peace and to effect a settlement between the warring countries. I appreciate the steps being taken by the Government of India to rescue those Indians who could be affected by this war. I would like to know the total number of Indians in Iran as well as in Iraq and what arrangements have been made to evacuate, rescue them. It is painful, the Indians who have gone there have mostly gone there to earn their bread with sincere labour, they are the affected people there. So, I hope, I wish, sanity would prevail over both the regimes. Otherwise, in both the countries civilians are the worst-affected because of the recent aerial attacks. Some of the countries in the globe are happy over this present conflict in Iran and Iraq because oil, being in the hands of the Gulf countries, in the hands of Iran and Iraq, is a powerful instrument, weapon in global politics. Therefore, some of the countries have vested interest. They may be happy to see that the war continues, but not we. Whenever war breaks out in any part of the world, we have always raised our voice for peace. The moment I came to know that hon. Shri Natwar Singh is going to make a statement on the floor of Rajya Sabha today, I expected, I wished our Minister to at least make a statement of peace, a statement of truce in our neighbouring land, Sri Lanka. But I was disappointed. (*Time bell rings*). I hope he will give that moment of relief sooner the better. Otherwise, more lives on both sides would be lost Here also, brothers are fighting brothers. Even though it may not fit in the discussion here, I am not making an accusation but a prayer that he should come out with a statement of truce on Sri Lanka also. Here whatever steps have been taken by the Government of India, I on behalf of my party endorse them and we would extend full support to the Government of India in this behalf.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO (Jammu and Kashmir): Mr. Vice-Chairman, we are fortunate that both Iraq and Iran look to us as their greatest friends. I would have very much liked that apart from welcoming the Security Council Resolution, Government of India should have also, through this statement, appealed to both the countries, Iraq and Iran, to stop this war in which thousands are being killed every day. As an Indian I take this opportunity, through your medium, to appeal to both the Governments of Iraq and Iran that they should end this war. No purpose will be served by escalating or continuing this war. As a Muslim of India I also quote the Prophet saying;

†[امل مومنون أخوة]

अनमल मोमिनीन अख्वत ।

That every Muslim is a brother. Both these countries are Muslim countries. They should not escalate the war. They should treat themselves as brothers. Even if one country has something to say about the other, it should be forgotten. They try to end this war and do something about is.

I pose only two small questions to the hon. Minister. One, apart from welcoming the Security Council Resolution and what Mr. Gopalsamy has mentioned about Mr. Narasimha Rao having gone there and Mr. Natwar Singh having also taken the initiative, what is the latest initiative taken by India in bringing the two warring factions together because India is looked upon as a leader of the non-aligned nations and both the countries are non-aligened?

Two, I would like to know if there is a roster available in the Indian Embassy in Tehran and in Baghdad about the names and addresses of the Indians living in these two countries so that in case of need to effect evaeuation of the families, they may be informed to send their families or avail of the opportunity?

The third point I would like to ask the Minister, is, if there is a possibility of reducing the staff of the Indian Embassy in both these countries to the minimum so that the danger to our Indians is minimised.

With these words, I again appeal to both the countries to listen to voice of reason and stop this war.

Thank you.

DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA HEPTULLA (Maharashtra): Mr. Vice Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

†Transliteration in Arabic script.

[Shri Nazma Heptulla]

I am worried about the condition of the Indians living both in Iraq and Iran. But I am satisfied that our Government is going to take all possible measures for their safety and security.

In this marathon Iraq-Iran war, there have been periods of escalation and lull and whenever there have been periods of lull, there were hopes that the war might stop, there might be ceasefire, there might be some settlement. Mrs. Indira Gandhi as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement and also as a friend of Iraq and Iran had made many efforts to stop the war and bring about a political solution of the problems between the two countries. After Smt. Indira Gandhi, our Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, made many efforts to settle the Iraq-Iran war. Even the Non-Aligned Conference we had to hold in our country although it was not our turn. It was Iraq's turn but to save them from embarrassment, we hosted the Non-Aligned Conference.

I also remember, after my visit to Iraq in 1985, I requested our Prime Minister to take a fresh initiative to stop the war and he sent two emissaries—one to Iraq and one to Iran—to bring about a ceasefire. But unfortunately in spite of our country's efforts, the efforts of the NAM, the Islamic Conference and the United Nations and even the Resolution of the Security Council have not brought about any settlement of this war. Not only are we worried but we are unhappy that two friendly non-aligned countries, two neighbouring countries, are locked in an unfortunate war for the last 7 years resulting in loss of property and human life. We are also worried because if in our neighbourhood war is going to escalate to the extent it has done now, it would be dangerous for us also and for the neighbours as well. With the problems existing in the Middle East, in the occupied territories of Gaza and West Bank and the Iraq-Iran war not slowing down but escalating, I think it is very necessary at that we should start our peace initiative and negotiations at every level. I understand that in the past we have not been successful. But that does not mean that we should stop trying again and again. Through you, Sir, I would request the Prime Minister and our Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Natwar Singh to take a fresh initiative to bring about a peaceful settlement of Iraq-Iran war the general question of the Iraq-Iran war because it is very sad that two friendly countries are locked in such a kind of unnecessary war. I know that Iraq has accepted the Security Council Resolution and all the moves of any organisation for a peaceful settlement. But I wish that somebody would see that Iran would also extend the hand of friendship and peace.

श्री राम चन्द्र विकल (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, माननीय विदेश मंत्री श्री के० नटवर सिंह ने जो यहां वक्तव्य दिया है, ईरान-इराक का युद्ध एक लम्बे समय से चल रहा है, लेकिन कुछ दिनों से इसने भयंकर रूप धारण कर लिया है और रेडियो पर और समाचार-पत्रों में जो संदेश, सूचनाएं आती हैं, वह भारी जन, धन की हानि की खबरें रोज सुबह-सुबह आ जाती हैं। साथ ही जो विषाक्त हथियार हैं, आज प्रक्षेपास्त्र का खुल कर कुछ दिनों से इस्तेमाल हो रहा है। यह बहुत दुख की बात है और जैसा भारत सरकार का रुख रहा है, हमारे प्रधान मंत्री जी का रुख रहा है, या पूर्व प्रधान मंत्री इन्दिरा गांधी जी का रुख रहा है, वह है कि दोनों देशों में सुलह करवाई जाए।

यह सुलह बावजूद भारत की सद्-भावना के कारण जो भी रहे हों, हो नहीं पा रही है और लड़ाई और बढ़ रही है। तो मैं यह निवेदन करना चाहूंगा और विदेश मंत्री जी से चाहूंगा कि विश्व जनमत बनाने के लिये भारत की भूमिका इसमें क्या-क्या है और क्या-क्या हो सकती है, उन संभावनाओं पर थोड़ी सी वह चर्चा करें।

इसके साथ ही जो बहुत बड़े विषाक्त हथियारों के बारे में अभी गोरबाचोव और रीगन के बीच में एक फैसला हुआ, तो क्या वह कुछ देशों के लिए था, एशिया के लिए नहीं था ? अगर ऐसी बात है, तो यह भी सोचा जाए कि वह बड़ी शक्तियां जो दुनिया में इन हथियारों को बना रही

हैं और रोक भी रही है, भारत तो बनाने में भी विश्वास नहीं रखता, उस भूमिका में कुछ हमारा पार्ट हो सकेगा या नहीं। साथ ही जो यहां से वहाँ गये हुए भारतवासी हैं, चाहे वह भारतीय दूतावास में हैं या निर्माण के कामों में या डैम वगैरह बनाने के कामों में गये हुए लोग हैं, व्यक्तिगत हों या सरकारी तौर पर, उनकी सुरक्षा के बारे में यह तो उन्होंने कहा कि हम कोई प्लान तैयार कर रहे हैं और उनको जल्दी लायेंगे। तो उनकी तादाद की भी पूरी जानकारी होनी चाहिए और उनकी कठिनाइयों की भी और उनको कब तक लाया जा सकेगा।

इन दो-तीन शब्दों के साथ मैं इतना जरूर कहना चाहूंगा कि भारत की जनता, यहां की सभ्यता और संस्कृति "वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम" के सिद्धांत को मानते हुए, विश्व शांति को मानते हुए "वनस्पति द्यौःशांति वनस्पति शांति" सारी चीजों में शांति चाहते हुए, ईरान-इराक का जो युद्ध है, जो उससे विनाश हो रहा है, उस मानव संहार को रुकवाने में कुछ और तेज कदम क्या-क्या हो सकेंगे, यह मैं जानना चाहता हूं।

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Mr. Vice-Chairman, I want to thank the hon. Members who have participated in this discussion—Mr. Narayansamy, Mr. Satyanarayan Reddy, Mr. Gopalsamy, Mr. G. R. Matto, Dr. Najma Heptalla and Vikalji.

The statement that I made *suo motu* is confined to a particular situation that we are facing now and not addressed to the general question of the Iraq-Iran war on which on a number of occasions I, my colleague and the Prime Minister have made statements in both the Houses of Parliament. Our broad policy is known.

I, of course, feel a deep sense of sorrow, anguish and a certain amount of helplessness and disappointment that this war which has now gone on for over seven years and cost so many lives, is not coming to an end. On the contrary, the present situation is one we do not desire. There has been a certain escalation which has led to our finding it necessary to ask the families of the India-based staff, their wives, sisters, mothers and children and some other Indian nationals who are there to be evacuated from Tehran. The necessity, I hope, will not arise, in the case of Baghdad. There are about 7,737 Indians in Iraq and about 2,500 in Iran. Most of the Indian personnel in Iran are doctors and experts. A number of them live in and around Tehran. Now, the missiles have fallen in and around Tehran and there have been a number of casualties. Mercifully no Indian lives have been lost or any of our personnel injured, but in order to avoid any risk to the lives, Government have decided to evacuate these families. We hope to do so in the next 48 hours.

With regard to the attempts that India has made, I would just like to mention that exactly five years ago the Seventh Non-aligned Summit meeting in Delhi under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Gandhi we took an initiative to end the war. She, of course, took a leading part in the discussions and I, in my capacity as the Secretary-General of the Seventh Non-aligned Summit, participated in those discussions. Now, Zimbabwe is the Chairman of the Non-aligned movement. At the Harare Summit in 1986, August, the Prime Minister had had discussion with both the leaders of Iran and Iraq with regard to the war and also with other Members. There is a ministerial Group of the Non-Aligned Movement consisting of Cuba, India, Zimbabwe and PLO. We are keeping in touch, but no particular new initiative has been taken because the Security Council is seized of the matter and the Resolution which I have referred to—598—was passed only some weeks ago. We are hoping that it will be possible to implement it. From our side we have had discussions on a number of occasions both here and outside India. Mr. Velayati, the Foreign Minister of Iran was here in November and we had discussions with him. I, myself, am hoping to visit Iran in the not too distant future to exchange views with Iranian friends. We have ties of friendship going back many many centuries with both the countries. Indian culture is greatly influenced by the cultures of Iraq and Iran. Our language is greatly influenced by theirs.

[Shri K. Natwar Singh]

our dress and our food are also influenced by theirs. So, it is inevitable that our interests in these two countries should be deep and profound. So, nothing can make us more unhappy than to see the situation as it exists.

Now, as Dr. Heptulla said the Islamic Conference have tried their best, the Non-aligned Movement have tried their best, the late Olof Palme had tried, the United Nations is seized of the problem constantly. Here are two Islamic Countries, Two Asian Countries, two Non-aligned countries in this unhappy situation. All hope and pray that this horrible and terrible war comes to an end and the miseries and agonies of the people of both sides are a thing of the past so that these two countries which have so much to contribute not only to West Asia, but also to Asia and the world can have peace, because it will take a very long time for these countries to get back to the standards that they so happily had attained before this war started. Our effort and our desire and our attempt is to see that this conflict is ended as early as possible.

Shri Matto asked whether we had the names and addresses of the Indians living there. Yes, we do have them. We have pretty up-to-date information about who is living where and we would do our best and as promptly as we can to meet their demands and requirements. The welfare and safety of our personnel in these countries is constantly under review and it is the responsibility of the Indian Ambassadors in both countries to see that nothing happens to them or endangers their lives and welfare. And if anything happens as happened now, in Iran, we have taken immediate action to get the families back to India.

विकल जी ने पूछा है कि विश्व जनमत बनाने में भारत की क्या भूमिका है, उसके लिए जहां भी मौका मिलता है नान-एलाइनमेंट में यूनाइटेड नेशन्ज में दो तरफा बात-चीत होती है इराक से या ईरान से वहां यही हमारा प्रयत्न रहता है, यही कोशिश रहती है कि यह लड़ाई बंद हो और दोनों देशों में समझौता हो जाए तथा चैन और अमन हो जिससे कि उनके बाशिन्दे अपनी जिन्दगी चैन से खुशी में गुजार सकें और यही कोशिश होती आ रही है।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Now the House stands adjourned and will meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, the 9th March, 1988, at 11.00 A.M.

The House then adjourned at thirty-six minutes past six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Wednesday, the 9th March, 1988.